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PAGE 01

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TOR: 191253Z NOV 75

R 191009Z NOV 75  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6908  
BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 16635

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJECT: PRESS STORY ALLEGING SOVIETS DO NOT EXPECT SALT  
AGREEMENT BEFORE 25TH CONGRESS

1. POLITICAL COUNSELOR NOVEMBER 18 ASKED WASHINGTON  
POST CORRESPONDENT PETER OSNOS FOR BACKGROUND OF  
STORY WHICH APPEARED UNDER HIS BYLINE SEVERAL DAYS  
AGO IN HERALD TRIBUNE CITING SOVIET SOURCES AS  
SAYING THAT THERE WAS LITTLE HOPE FOR SALT AGREEMENT  
OR BREZHNEV WASHINGTON SUMMIT BEFORE 25TH CPSU  
CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY. OSNOS SAID HIS SOURCE FOR  
STORY HAS EXCELLENT CONTACTS IN CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
APPARATUS AND THAT HE HAD BEEN BRIEFED BY CENTRAL  
COMMITTEE ON THIS SUBJECT, IT WAS OSNOS' ASSUMPTION  
THEREFORE, THAT THIS WAS GENUINE CURRENT SOVIET  
ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION. OSNOS ALSO SAID THIS IN-  
FORMATION WAS PASSED ON TO HIM BEFORE SECRETARY'S  
PRESS CONFERENCE COMMENTS CRITICIZING LATEST SOVIET  
RESPONSE ON SALT.

2. OSNOS ASSUMES THAT THIS WAS CLEARLY BEING PASSED  
ON TO HIM FOR BARGAINING PURPOSES. SOVIETS, HE SAID,  
WERE CONVEYING MESSAGE THAT WHILE THEY WOULD VERY  
MUCH LIKE TO SEE SALT AGREEMENT AND WASHINGTON SUMMIT  
IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THEY WERE FAIRLY RELAXED ABOUT  
THIS AND WOULD NOT BE HURRIED INTO AN UNSATISFACTORY  
AGREEMENT. OSNOS ENVINCED ANNOYANCE AT STATEMENT  
CARRIED IN SAME ARTICLE THAT POSTPONEMENT OF SALT  
SETTLEMENT WOULD IN EFFECT MEAN NO SALT AGREEMENT  
UNTIL 1977 BECAUSE UPCOMING U.S. ELECTION CAMPAIGN  
WOULD INTERFERE WITH NEFOTIATING PROCESS. OSNOS  
STRESSED THAT SOVIET SOURCE MADE NO SUCH STATEMENT  
AND THAT THIS WAS ADDED BY WASHINGTON POST EDITORS.  
OSNOS SAID THAT HE HAS CONTRARY IMPRESSION THAT  
MOSCOW BELIEVES SALT AGREEMENT WILL BE REACHED BY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L

20 NOV  
1975

SP

SAID

CG

RUE

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POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE DESPITE ELECTION CAMPAIGN.  
MATLOCK

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